

**THE RHODE ISLAND CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MARKETING COMMITTEE MEETING**

April 20, 2006

A meeting of the Marketing Committee of the Rhode Island Convention Center Authority Board of Commissioners was held on April 20, 2006 pursuant to notice at the Rhode Island Convention Center Boardroom, One Sabin Street, Providence, Rhode Island.

Board members present were Chairman Dale Venturini, Authority Chairman, David Duffy, Commissioners Jerry Massa and Jeff Hirsh.

Also in attendance were Kerrie Bennett, RICCA; Neil Schriever, PWCVB; Tim Muldoon and John McGinn, RICC; David DePetrillo, RI Division of Tourism; Cheryl Schadone, Dunkin' Donuts Center; Martha Sheridan, Newport CVB; Kate Moulding and Ray Hill, Local 217 and Eileen Smith, recording secretary.

Ms. Venturini called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m. Chairman Venturini announced that the next Marketing Committee meeting would be held on May 11th at 12:00.

Noting that the minutes of the March meeting had been distributed, Chairman Venturini sought a motion to approve.

Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Hirsh and seconded by Mr. Massa it

was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the minutes as distributed.

Mr. Duffy noted that the Big East will be honoring Dave Gavitt for his selection to the Basketball Hall of Fame. He said that because Mr. Gavitt is a member of the Authority's Board the event should take place in our facility.

Ms. Venturini asked Mr. McGinn to report on Convention Center marketing. Mr. McGinn began his power point presentation (attached). Mr. McGinn reported on several contracted events, including the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite of Free Masons in August 2008, Gospel Explosion, May 2006 and International Wire & Cable Symposium being held in November 2008. Mr. McGinn also presented tentative booking highlights. PWCVB and the Convention Center joint industry participation included New England Meetings Industry Conference and Tradeshow and the Business Expo.

Ms. Venturini recognized Mr. Schriever and asked him to report on CVB sales activity. Mr. Schriever brought to the attention of the committee the number of Fiscal Year 06 year to date definite bookings in comparison to Fiscal Year 05 that resulted in only slightly more room nights. Mr. Schriever said that the trend is for smaller events and therefore more are necessary to keep pace with the prior

year room nights. Mr. Schriever noted that some attendees go outside the block for room reservations. Mr. Schriever presented recent definite bookings highlights and several tentative bookings. Mr. Schriever noted recent travel and trade show participation as well as groups that have scheduled site inspections. Mr. Schriever distributed books that are used by the sales staff when negotiating with a group. Mr. Schriever reported on recent definite booking highlights as well as tentative bookings. He noted that the International Wire and Cable Symposium would have many attendees from out of the country. Mr. Schriever informed the committee that Tom Riel would be leaving the CVB and taking the position of Director of Sales for the new Renaissance Hotel. Mr. Duffy asked if the new hotels were working with the CVB. Mr. Schriever said that they have been cooperative and are responding to bids. Conversations ensued regarding the article in the Providence Business News that reported that Providence hotel rates are the fifth highest in the nation. Mr. Schriever said that the article was fair. He noted that rates in first tier cities are rising and we have been able to compete.

Ms. Venturini recognized Cheryl Schadone who reported on upcoming events at the Dunkin' Donuts Center leading up to the facility's closing for the first phase of the renovation. Ms. Schadone reported that Champions on Ice is tracking along the national average and noted that some shows in other parts of the country have been canceled because of low ticket sales. She said that the promoter is distributing over 2,000 tickets to local charitable organizations. Ms.

Schadone said that circus tickets are going very well. Ms. Schadone invited everyone to participate in the walk with the animals on May 2nd.

Ms. Venturini suggested that the Marketing Committee authorize the sponsorship of Waterfire to help sell the destination. Mr. Schriever said that Waterfire is a great tool for the CVB. Mr. Duffy wondered if that would be the most effective use of marketing dollars. Ms. Venturini noted that a Waterfire would only be used as a tool to seal the deal. Mr. Duffy said that we need some guidelines before we proceed.

RHODE ISLAND TOURISM DIVISION UPDATE

Mr. DePetrillo, Director of Tourism for the State of Rhode Island presented the following report:

DOMESTIC GROUP/PACKAGE MARKETING PROGRAM

This weekend Rhode Island is hosting the very first domestic Product Development Tour ever held by the National Tour Association. We will have four press and six key wholesale tour operators participating. One of the travel writers is representing four publications, so we'll have great coverage. We estimate the editorial coverage will be worth \$50,000 from these writers. We're confident that most, if not all of these operators will generate new business for Rhode Island hotels and attractions.

DOMESTIC LEISURE MARKETING

We are now well into the peak vacation planning season. The vast majority of people have already made up their minds about the destination for their biggest vacation. We've been keeping a daily tab on the VisitRhodeisland.com web site, to see the amount of traffic it's generating, what's getting the attention on the web site and what the trends are. So far the activity has been pretty strong in terms of site visits, people ordering our Travel Guide, using our TRIP planner to plan their vacations, clicking into our Heritage Trails, and the new Nature Trails. Another way we have been tracking consumer interest is through a survey that we included in our Official Rhode Island Travel Guide. We're very pleased with the initial response and have already begun tabulating results.

INTERNATIONAL MARKETING

This weekend we have a familiarization tour that we are conducting in cooperation with IcelandAir, which carries a lot of traffic between Logan and the UK. The tour includes a top executive from IcelandAir, a UK travel writer and two UK tour operators. In a few weeks we will be headed to the largest marketplace for inbound foreign tourism that's held here in the U.S. Coordinated by the Travel Industry Association of America and a key part of our international marketing strategy, Rhode Island will have a booth and will also be represented by Discover New England.

TOURISM WEEK

I hope you will all be attending the Tour & Travel Exchange and the 21st Annual Tourism Unity Luncheon which will be held at the Convention Center on May 15. We have also added another event that week specifically for the professional staff of the CVB's and regional tourism councils. This DMO Day will focus on those issues and challenges specific to them and will be a great opportunity to share ideas and develop professionally.

Mr. Schriever congratulated Mr. DePetrillo on this year's Rhode Island Travel Guide.

Martha Sheridan from the Newport CVB reported that the room blocks available for the Women's Golf tournament are filling fast. She noted that the Department of Transportation has been very easy to work with in arranging transportation from other locations in the state. Ms. Bennett reported that Rhode Island has been receiving a great deal of national press because of the tournament, the Contender boxing and films being made in Providence.

Hearing no further discussion, Ms. Venturini entertained a motion to adjourn. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Hirsh and seconded by Mr. Duffy it was unanimously

VOTED: to adjourn at 1:10 P.M.